

Congresswoman NYDIA M. VELAZQUEZ

Representing New York's 12th Congressional District
Ranking Democratic Member, House Small Business Committee



Seniors Deserve Medicare Drug Benefit

Comprehensive solutions needed for prescription drug needs

Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez called on President Bush for a comprehensive Medicare drug benefit last month, arguing that New York seniors are overwhelmed by costs for medicines they need.

"We are in a health care crisis," Congresswoman Velázquez said. "A study I commissioned showed that New York seniors shell out almost 150 percent more than the drug companies' preferred customers."

Ten million older Americans now pay for drugs out of pocket. As the senior population grows and drug treatment expands, Medicare is falling short.

The President's plan requires \$25 for a discount drug card program, and it offers savings of only 10 to 15 percent on costs.

"That doesn't even keep up with price inflation," Congresswoman Velázquez said. Last year drug costs increased 17 percent on average -- after after five years of double-digit growth.



Congresswoman Velázquez announces her opposition to the President's Medicare drug plan.

"It's time for a comprehensive drug benefit, so seniors don't bankrupt themselves to stay healthy," Velázquez said.

Welfare Reform Must Protect Families

Velázquez proposal would drop deadline, allow immigrants to benefit



Congresswoman Velázquez unveiled her child care initiative at a children's center last month.

Last month, Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez launched her Invest In Our Children Initiative to protect the smallest, most vulnerable Americans when the programs that benefit them are threatened.

"The single most important thing in determining the future of this nation is our children," Velázquez said. "If we fail to invest in today's young people, we can be sure that tomorrow's adults will not live up to their fullest potential."

One of her priorities is to ensure affordable, quality child care for the nation's most needy families. The President's new welfare plan requires more work from single parent families, but does not expand child care resources to make that possible.

"Every day in New York, 1 out of 4 children lives in poverty and more than 50,000 children are on a waiting list for public child care, Congresswoman Velázquez said. "A first step in helping children is to help their parents by increasing day care funding."

Ohio Community Helps September 11 Families

Families of SEIU members lost at WTC receive \$24,000



Congresswoman Velázquez and Rep. Marcy Kaptur (I) meet families of September 11th victims.

The Service Employees International Union Local 32B-32J had more than 900 workers at the World Trade Center when it was attacked on September 11. Twenty-four members died. Last month Congresswoman Velázquez hosted a ceremony where Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) donated the proceeds of her Holiday Spirit Fund to the families of those lost that day.

“After the tragic events of September 11, constituents from Congresswoman Kaptur’s district in Ohio wanted to contribute something to help those affected by the terrorist attacks,” Congresswoman Velázquez said. “Through their generous contributions, the fund grew from a few hundred dollars, to a few thousand dollars, to almost \$25,000.”

Explained Kaptur, “The money collected through the generosity of Northwest Ohioans will help SEIU families who lost a loved one.”

Pataki Earns Kudos on Gowanus

Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez joined the Gowanus Canal Community Development Corp. to honor Gov. George Pataki last month for his work on restoring the Gowanus Canal and neighboring areas.

The Governor recently secured \$270,000 in state funds that are critical to completing the comprehensive study to guide redevelopment of the canal as it recovers from 100 years of industrial abuse.



Velázquez Brownfields Bill to Revitalize Communities

Initiative helps small businesses to redevelop industrial properties



Congresswoman Velázquez, here with Tom Russo and Phaedra Thomas, unveiled her brownfields reuse bill last month.

Joined by Brooklyn community organizations, Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez unveiled a legislative initiative to speed the economic development of “brownfield” sites in New York City and across the nation.

Brownfields are old industrial properties no longer in use due to environmental contamination. Many brownfield properties are in urban neighborhood that would benefit from clean-up and reuse of these lots.

Congresswoman Velázquez’s Brownfields Use Invigoration and Land Development (BUILD) Act is designed to spur development plans for Brownfields and put them to productive use.

New York City has as many as 6,000 vacant industrial properties covering 4,000 acres. There are three million acres of brownfields across the country.

“This bill will help do two things at once,” Congresswoman Velázquez said. “It will help improve the environment and spark economic growth in our neighborhoods.”

Grants Awarded to Our Community

Pratt Institute.....	\$168,396	Brooklyn Bridge Park Dev. Corp.....	\$993,307
To support technical assistance for HUD grant applicants		To develop pedestrian approaches to park.	